

## An Elamite Gilgameš Text from Argištihenele, Urartu (Armavir-blur, 8th century B.C.)

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### I

In this discovery, made by the expedition headed by G. A. Tiratsian of the Institute of Archaeology, Academy of Sciences of Armenia<sup>1</sup>, everything is amazing: first, the site of the find of an Elamite cuneiform text in a big Urartian city north of the Araxes. Then, the main two tablets are unique in that they represent the first known literary composition in Elamite; in some respects, unique in the whole corpus of cuneiform texts known to-day. The text belongs to the circle of legends centering around the most popular hero of antiquity, Gilgameš, adding an Elamite version to the already known Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite, and Hurrian versions.

At first sight it might be thought to be a literary dialogue. It seems, however, that the text is composed as a scenario with three parts, namely, for two soloists, Gilgameš (spelled *giš*, in the OB way), and Šiduri (Akkad. Siduri), and a Chorus. The latter comments on the speeches of the conversing person, or it seconds Gilgameš. Certain phrases recur constantly: *tukka mił tuhapi* 'plenty desire(s) have appeared'; *ullu mił tuhapi* 'plenty sacrifice(s) have appeared'. The text confirms de Liagre Böhl's old suggestion that the epics were performed antiphonally<sup>2</sup>; we have noted earlier<sup>3</sup> that, in the epics, the introductory text preceding the further verse parts couched in the first person, was pronounced separately: in a rhythmically different way or simply in prose. The obvious fact that the Ancient Oriental written literature was influenced by the oral tradition can be supported by postulating a stage of development characterized by antiphonal or choral recitation of the epic

<sup>1</sup> We are very grateful to Professor Tiratsian for temporarily lending the tablets to the Hermitage, which allowed us to copy and study them.

<sup>2</sup> F. M. Th. de Liagre Böhl, *Het Gilgamesj Epos*, (1958) 114–115.

<sup>3</sup> *Epos o Gilgameše*, ed. I. M. Diakonoff (1961) 136.

texts during a sacral dramatization of the plot. Such dramatization presupposes a stage-director, as pointed out for the Greek theatre by A. I. Jankowski (1988). The stage-director being, at the same time, the protagonist actor, the play, if staged in another country, would still necessarily be performed in this actor's language, like Euripides' *Bacchae* in Artavasdes II's Armenia, or the Gilgameš 'play' in Urartian Argištihenele, i.e., at a very considerable distance from the country of origin.

All three Elamite texts in question have been unearthed during the excavations at the site of Armavir-blur, the former Urartian city of Argištihenele. It was founded by Argišti I who reigned for more than twenty years in the 8th cent. B.C. — at a time which, for Urartu, was a period of stability and prosperity, and of its successful rivalry with Assyria in their struggle for hegemony in Western Asia. The *tepe* of Armavir lies to the north of the river Araxes, W. of Yerevan; it has been suggested that it was the actual capital of Urartu under Argišti I, Tušpā (Van) being only the coronation and cultic centre, like Aššur in Assyria.

The higher of the two ridges of Armavir-blur corresponds to the citadel, the other and more sizable ridge hides the site of the inhabited city. The texts were found inside the citadel walls, on the southern slopes of the *tepe*, in Room 22 of an 8th–7th cent. building adjoining the temple; the stratum contained some later intrusions, but also some loose Urartian architectural details (information courtesy of G. A. Tiratsian).

That the texts were written in Elamite was immediately recognized by I. M. Diakonoff who, however, originally suggested that the main tablet (*N° 1*) was an administrative or business letter, since fragments of direct speech in that text were obvious; a more careful hand-copy by N. B. Jankowska showed the rather spacious blanks dividing the written text at different places; analogies could be found only in literary-religious texts. Such a blank is a signal for a caesura or a change in the contents of the text; in the Hittite texts the corresponding device was lining. Reading *Ši-du-ri-bad-ma* in obv. 3', *Ši-d[u-ri] . . .* *na-an-ri* in obv. 5'–6', and *giš na-an-ri* in obv. 8' et al. (*nanri* meaning "she/he said"), N. B. Jankowska could deduce with certainty that this was a dialogue between Siduri and Gilgameš, seconded by a chorus (introduced by the ideogram *PAP* 'all').

Text *N° 2* was recognized as the continuation of *N° 1* because of the recurrence of certain logograms and leading words ([*X da-na*]

X GIŠ.PEŠ, PAP, *tuk-ka*). The clay and thickness of the two tablets (1.7 cm) are similar; also the handwriting, although clearer in N° 2, can be identified as the same.

The following is a first attempt to present all three texts to the reader; being quite unique, they will no doubt need further study. The poor level of our knowledge of Elamite makes an adequate translation at this stage most difficult. However, the texts are so significant, that it is worth while introducing them to scholarship without delay. Not to mention their importance for studying Elamite as such, they are of considerable interest from the point of view of religious literary style. They attest to the spread of the Gilgameš legend not only to Mesopotamia and Syria (in Sumerian and Akkadian) and Asia Minor (in Hurrian and Hittite) but also to Elam and Urartu (in Elamite). Chronologically our new Elamite version is slightly older than the founding of Aššurbānapi's library, but both typologically and as a ritualistic text it is very archaic. The name of the protagonist, Gilgameš, is spelled in the OB way, GIŠ ("fighting stick", as it were), while the oldest Sumerian texts call the hero Bil(i)-ga-mes, probably "the ancestor (or 'elder kinsman') is a hero". The Elamite spelling points to contacts with the OB version of the Gilgameš tale as opposed to later versions. Note that the Flood episode related by Ut-napišti is in the Nineveh version certainly an interpolation (like tablet XII of the same version, although probably interpolated at different dates)<sup>4</sup>. This means that the Siduri episode, of little importance in the Nineveh version, must have originally been the final *dénouement* of the epic.

Situated in the S.-W. of Iran, approximately in the modern oštāns of Ĥuzistān and Fārs, Elam had close cultural connections with the West, from where it borrowed its cuneiform writing system (in the 2nd mill. B.C., Akkadian was actually the spoken language in the region of Elam's capital, Susa). But no less important were its ties to the East. As shown by McAlpin<sup>5</sup>, the language of the Elamites was distantly akin to that of the Brahui (southern Afghanistan and south-western Pakistan), and to the languages spoken by the Dravidians, aboriginal in Southern India; this implies also ancient cultural ties. Such a double cultural orientation

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>5</sup> D. W. McAlpin, *Proto-Elamo-Dravidian: The Evidence and the Implications* (Philadelphia, 1981).

to the West and the East is characteristic. Thus in the 3rd mill. B.C. Elam had an aboriginal (eastern) dynasty, but an Akkadian speaking (western oriented) dynasty in the 2nd. Similarly, Mitanni, a state inhabited by Hurrians, a northern people akin to the Urartians, had a dynasty of Indo-Iranian (eastern) origin, and later Armenia had a Parthian (eastern) dynasty. We know of an international Akkadian-Elamite treaty in the 3rd mill. B.C., of Akkadian business documents and Elamite royal inscriptions in the 2nd mill. B.C., of an Elamite translation (or perhaps even the original) of Darius' I inscriptions, with Iranian<sup>6</sup>, Elamite, Akkadian and Aramaic as the official languages, in the 1st mill. B.C., and of numerous administrative documents in Elamite found in Ĥuzistān and Fārs (including Anšan = Tepe Malyān) and even in Sistān, down to the 5th cent. B.C.

In the 8th–7th cent. B.C. Elam, along with Assyria and Urartu, was one of the three major powers of Western Asia. This might have been the reason for the appearance of our Elamite text in Urartu. What could have been the occasion for the appearance of an Elamite dramatized ritual text in a big Urartian city, possibly the temporary capital of the land? Probably there would have been a celebration of this rite *in situ*. Why in Elamite? N. Jankowska's guess is that it was celebrated on the occasion of a marriage between an Urartian king and an Elamite princess.<sup>7</sup> Elam, being a great power, would be the obvious country for a king of Urartu to

<sup>6</sup> 'Aryan', according to the text itself; Median according to the arguments presented by myself; the early Achaemenid texts are in Persian-influenced Median, in contrast to pure Persianisms in the Elamite version; see Diakonoff, The origin of the "Old Persian" writing system and the Ancient Oriental epigraphic and annalistic traditions, in: W. B. Henning Memorial Volume (London, s.a.) 98 sqq. (table p. 116 sq.; text p. 122). On the order of the versions of the Bisutun inscription as carved on the rock see R. Borger, *Die Chronologie des Darius-Denkmal am Behistun-Felsen*, in: *Nachrichten der Akad. der Wiss. in Göttingen I. Phil.-hist. Klasse* (1982/3). Borger's ascribing the invention of the Old Persian script to Darius I personally is, however, not acceptable.

<sup>7</sup> Diplomatic marriages of the Egyptian pharaohs with Babylonian and Mitannian princesses are not a close enough analogy, because the latter did become only concubines, not queens. But cf. the marriage of the Hittite king Hattusilis III with the Hurrian princess Pudu-Heba which is a good analogy, because she did become a queen, and many important Hurrian rituals were imported to Boğazköy, among others the Hurrian Gilgameš fragment, mentioning both Huwawa and Siduri, cf. Friedrich, *Kleinasiatische Sprachdenkmäler* (1932) 34–35.

be linked with in matrimonial union at a time of Urartu's rivalry with Assyria; and the content of the texts — the quest for the "Plant of Birth" — is appropriate for a marriage celebration.<sup>8</sup>

The Elamite texts hitherto known are royal inscriptions, legal and administrative documents. It is but natural that their vocabulary must have been radically different from that of the literary texts. Therefore, in our attempt to translate the texts we could not base ourselves on *topoi* already known from the published material. The best we could extract from already known Elamite texts, are certain approximate landmarks from which the interpreter could proceed.

The contents of our text N° 1 began to dawn upon us from the moment Jankowska grasped its formal structure. Therefore, in studying the translation, one should pay more attention to the interrelationship of the passages or paragraphs, mostly divided by blanks, than to the mere sequence of lines. The division of the text into lines may be misleading for the understanding of the structure of the text, which at first appears as an indivisible and obscure mass.

Diakonoff is responsible for the provisional grammatical interpretation; differences and vacillations of opinion are relegated to the commentary. For the analysis of the text we used Diakonoff's essay on Elamite grammar (in the preparation of which he was grateful to have access to E. Reiner's work in ms.<sup>9</sup>); but the best grammatical help was at present the essay on Elamite by Françoise Grillet-Susini.<sup>10</sup> The main point in which we differ from the latter, was that for us *-ma-* in verbal forms is an imperfective (inflectum) aspect morph, while Grillet regards it as a form of an auxiliary verb *ma-* interpolated in to the main verb. This, however, does not affect the gist of the translation.

No useful attempt at translation could probably have been made without the new Elamite vocabulary in two volumes by W. Hinz and H. Koch (ElamWB, 1987). However, we must admit that the

<sup>8</sup> In the sacred marriage rite before the enthronization of Šulgi, the goddess meets the prince at the quay of Kulab, singing a hymn in *eme-sal*, the Sumerian "women's language". See J. Klein, *Three Šulgi Hymns* (1981) 125.

<sup>9</sup> I. M. D'jakonov (Diakonoff), *Elamskij jazyk*, in: *Jazyki Azii i Afriki III* (1979) 37 sqq.; E. Reiner, *Elamite*, in: *Hdb. der Orientalistik*, I. Abt., Bd. 2, Abschnitt 1–2, 2 (1968).

<sup>10</sup> F. Grillet-Susini, *Éléments de grammaire élamite* (1987).

older translations quoted by the authors of the dictionary were sometimes more useful than their final — although often query-marked — interpretations of the vocables. Nonetheless, even our groping translations could by no means have been achieved without the aid of the ElamWB<sup>11</sup> as a whole, including the contexts quoted as translated by its compilers' predecessors.

## 2

In this article hand-copies of all three texts are published with transliteration. The basis for the identification of the signs was mainly R. T. Hallock's list<sup>12</sup>; of course, the texts include signs belonging to another period and to another text-type, but they had to be used, since no other early 1st mill. B.C. Elamite literary texts are known. This means that corrections will probably be needed in the future, not only as to the interpretation of vocables, but also as to the reading of the signs. The more readable lines of the main text are given in a provisional translation with a grammatical and a tentative real commentary to both *Arg. 1* and *Arg. 2* in so far as the text can be understood to date. Here is a formal description of the tablet fragments.

*Arg. 1* (11×7 cm; 1,7 cm thick; *Fig. 1*); the clay is gray, unbaked; the original text had about thirty lines or more on both sides. The reverse of the tablet is in a very bad state of preservation; at least half of the readings are guesswork. On the obverse, about one half of the lines have been retained in a better state. The upper corner is destroyed, possibly by the tablet falling down by gliding from a repository raised above the ground or from an upper floor; also the whole of the upper edge of the tablet is lost, and it now lacks both the beginning and the end. Of three lines written on one of the side-edges, only three signs remain — one for each line. The other side-edge possibly held the colophon, but the text is hopelessly damaged.

*Arg. 2* (6×5 cm; 1,7 cm thick; *Fig. 2*). This is a fragment, apparently ending the text of another tablet. The clay is grey, unbaked, similar to that of *Arg. 1*; the fragment is a part of a tablet of approximately the same size as the latter, and was also inscribed on both sides.

<sup>11</sup> W. Hinz, H. Koch, *Elamisches Wörterbuch* (1987) (ElamWB).

<sup>12</sup> R. T. Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets* (1969) 83–86.

Arg. 3 (5×4 cm; 1,7 cm thick; Fig. 3). The clay is baked, beige-coloured, the signs more clearly spaced and larger. Obv. 2' seems to contain a masculine proper name; the last line of the reverse reads 9-bad UD.DA ha-mi-ip; hami-p means 'were taken (in)'; UD.DA may mean 'daily', or stand for (hu-)ud-da 'I did'. The text is certainly also in Elamite, but whether it belonged to the same composition cannot be decided.

## 3

## Transliteration

## Arg. 1

- 1' [...] . . . [...] . . .  
 2' [...] nap-pa-bad-da x [...] . . .  
 [...] for the sake of the gods . . .  
 3' Ši-du-ri-bad-ma nu-ul[n . . .]  
 (which?) before Šiduri [to] thee [ . . . .]  
 4' ti-ha-hu-ut taš-ma-ra (blank) [tuk-ka<sub>4</sub> mi-ul]  
 "verily, I/we (am/are) (a) stranger(s), help!", he said:  
 [Plenty desires]  
 5' du-ha-pi 10 da-na 10 GIŠ.PÈŠ m'Ši-āu-ri x x x]  
 have appeared (lit. "have broken out"); ten, just ten figs".  
 Šid[uri, the cup-bearer]  
 6' na-an-ri mī ku-ši nu-ja har-ma-ri[a (blank)]  
 speaks: "(Let) woman bear, but thou load on!" (or:  
 "impress!") she said. (Missing: "Chorus")  
 7' tuk-ka<sub>4</sub> mi-ul du-ha-pi 10 da-na 10 GIŠ.PÈŠ nap-[pa-bad-da]  
 "Plenty desires have appeared: ten, just ten figs [before  
 the] god[s]  
 8' ru-bad-ma 10 UD ir lu-iš-ti nu-un GIŠ na-an-ri 7 [x x x x]  
 (and) before man (for) ten days he had been presenting  
 it(?) to thee". Gilgameš speaks: "Seven [melammū?]  
 9' nap-pa ir mar-ri-iš-da-ra a-ak ku-ba-da dUTU-da  
 ka<sub>4</sub>-tā[m]-m[e]  
 which the gods took away (lit. "it-took-away"), and (that)  
 at sunrise, (were) the [if]e(?)  
 10' GIŠ-na PAP ū mī ku-šā nu-ja ir du-a pu-bad-ma ul-lu MIN  
 gal  
 of Gilgameš". Chorus (joins in): "The Plant (by) which woman  
 (is) to bear, which thou (hast), what I received, it (was)  
 for (lit. "before") (my) son, (it is a) sacrifice, sacrifice-meal!  
 (lit. "sacrifice-twice-meal")".

- 11' la-me-ma e ru-ir du-a ri-ti a-ha-hu-ut taš-ma-ra x [(x)]  
 "In (the peril of) death, O man, (was) that I received! Woman,  
 verily I/we am/are here, help!" he/they said.  
 12' nu-ku-bad-ma ul-lu mi-ul du-ha-pi 10 da-na 10 GIŠ.PÈŠ  
 PAP nu-ha-pi  
 "Before us sacrifice(s) have appeared: ten, just ten figs".  
 Chorus (joins in): "They are requested,  
 13' mī nap-pa-bad-da tuk-ka<sub>4</sub> ti-ri-man-ri nu-un GIŠ na-an-ri  
 for the sake of the goddesses the desire(s) let be told  
 thee!"  
 14' ti-ri nap-pa-bad-da tuk-ka<sub>4</sub> ti-ri-man-ri PAP ū mī ku-ši  
 "The speech (is) for the sake of gods, the desire(d) let be  
 told!" Chorus (joins in): "The Plant Woman to bear",  
 15' nu-ja m'ri-ti a-ha-hu-ut 'da-a-ti' āš-še du-na-ma-ra  
 which thou hast, woman, verily we are here, . . . a blessing(?)  
 I gave", he said. (But see chapter 5.)  
 16' x (blank) PAP nu-ku-bad-ma ul-lu mi-ul du-ha-pi 10 da-na  
 10 GIŠ.PÈŠ  
 Chorus: "Before us plenty desires have appeared: ten, just  
 ten figs . . ."  
 Rev. [mi-ul(?)]<sup>1</sup> [du-ha-pi(?)]<sup>1</sup> x x x nap-pa kur-ra-ma  
 18' e'-mu 5 GUD' mī-bad-da tuk-ka<sub>4</sub> ak-ka<sub>4</sub> nu-ši' ti-ri taš-du  
 19' ā[u]-iš-ma-ra (blank) nu-ku-bad-ma' x-ma mi-ul du-ha-pi  
 20' 10 da-na 10 GIŠ.PÈŠ nap-pa-bad-da tuk-ka<sub>4</sub> nu ru-ir ū lu  
 du nu ut  
 21' GIŠ na-an-ri sa-bat ti'-x-ma-ra (blank) PAP nu-ku-bad-ma  
 [tuk-ka<sub>4</sub>]  
 22' mi-ul du-ha-pi 10 da-na 10 GIŠ.PÈŠ nap-pa-bad-da [tuk-  
 ka<sub>4</sub>]  
 23' nu-ja-bad nu-un mar-ri-iš-da-ra x x x [x x]  
 24' ka<sub>4</sub>-tām du-iš da-na ha-me-ir' ul-lu nu-ha-pi' [x x]  
 25' (blank) PAP nu-ku-bad-ma mi-ul ā[u x x x]  
 26' nap-pa ir mar-ri-iš nu-un nu-[ha-pi x x x]  
 27' [G]IŠ na-an-ri (blank) [x x x]  
 28' mī nap-pa-bad-da [x x x]

## Arg. 2

- 1' [...] ka<sub>4</sub>-ni m'Pir-ad-da-rak  
 2' [...] x-da] ŠE m'Šu-ti-ja-āš la-pi  
 (and) Šutijaš are dead

- 3' [...] *-bad-ma* PAP *ú nu-da(-)ud-da*  
before . . . Chorus: "The Plant with thee I made (to . . .)"
- 4' [...] *x-da-še* <sup>m</sup>*Šu-ti-ja-áš*
- 5' [...] *x x áš AB SIN NITA*<sup>2</sup>
- 6' [...] PAP
- 7' [...] *x x*
- Rev. [...] *10 da-na* 10 *GIŠ.FEŠ*  
[. . . ten, just] ten figs
- 2' [...] *ka<sub>4</sub>-muš* (a profession)
- 3' [...] *x ūš da še zí*
- 4' [...] *x ma zi-ja-ak a-ak*  
[. . . was seen and also
- 5' [...] *AB ha-ra-ak a-ak*  
[. . . was loaded and also
- 6' [...] *Zi-ge A.ĤI BE-nu-nu*  
Zike(?), brother of BE-nunu(?)
- 7' [...] *ti-da-ak a-ak*  
[. . . was told a lie(?) and also
- 8' [...] (blank) PAP *mu-ku i-gi*  
Chorus: ". . . the brother(?)
- 9' [...] *tuk-ka<sub>4</sub> ir du-man-ra*  
[. . . the desired he may receive".

## Arg. 3

- 1' [ . . . . ] *x*
- 2' [ . . . . ] *-pi* <sup>m</sup>*Ik-ka<sub>4</sub>* *x x*
- 3' [ . . . . ] *GIŠ x hu x x ri*
- 4' [ . . . . ] *x x x x -ri*
- 5' [ . . . . ] *x x x*
- 6' [ . . . . ] *ir da<sup>2</sup>-an-ra*
- 7' [ . . . . ] *x az<sup>2</sup> bat-ti-su*
- 8' [ . . . . ] *x ku-ut i-ba ú-da*
- 9' [ . . . . ] *9-bad UD.DA ha-mi-ip*

## 4

## Explanatory note to translation

Gilgameš having come to appeal to the goddess Šiduri (Akkad. *Siduri sābitu*, "Siduri the cup-bearer (tavern-keeper)") for help, approaches her, asking for the "Plant of Birth"; his request is

seconded and supported by Chorus (possibly identical with the fifty youths who followed Gilgameš in his campaign against Huwawa in the Sumerian epic "Gilgameš and the Land of the Living").

Gilgameš complains that certain seven objects (possibly insignia or *melammū* of power) have been taken away from him by the gods. Siduri refuses to deliver the 'desired' (*tukka*), namely the "Plant of Birth", pointing out that to bear is for women, not for men. (The ten figs, repeatedly mentioned in the text, were, according to the observation of W. G. Lambert in another connection, used in the marriage rite: in her hand the woman squeezes out the juice of the fruit<sup>13</sup>). Gilgameš insists, referring to his sufferings and the peril of death, the only possibility of evading the latter being the birth of a son (cf. a similar motif in the Etana epic). In the classical Ninevite version of the Gilgameš Epic the Siduri episode is much damaged and has usually been perceived as a secondary one, since the Plant "An old man becomes young" is given to the hero with the help of another woman, namely the wife of Ut-napišti, the Babylonian Noah. It is well known that the hero did not manage to preserve the magic plant.

However, the older versions of the Gilgameš tale lacked, no doubt, the Flood and Ut-napišti episode, hence the encounter of Gilgameš with Siduri must have received a much greater importance. It was probably the finale of the Elamite tale, or stage-version, and the last line of Arg. 2 "the desired he can receive" is perhaps the end of the whole "drama"? Before that, however, the death of two women with unetymologizable names is announced, as well as the name of one Zike (Hurrian?), brother of BE-nunu (it

<sup>13</sup> W. G. Lambert, Devotion: The Language of Religion and Love, in: (ed.) M. Mindlin et al., *Figurative Language in the Ancient Near East* (1987) 27 sqq.

Epics, through genealogical constructions, are easily connected with royal marriage rites. Note the sacred marriage rite of Gilgameš and Išhara in the Akkadian epic. It is interrupted by Enkidu and thus plays a secondary role in the epic as such. But the rite of Išhara (probably like that of Šiduri) was important. It is known from a Hittite ritual (with invocations in Hurrian), see V. Haas/I. Wegner, *Die Rituale der Beschwörerinnen* <sup>SAL</sup>ŠU.GI, *Corpus der hurritischen Sprachdenkmäler* 1/5 (1988) 351 sqq. The symbolics of the bride-earth and the sword breaking it up and opening the entrance to the underworld are typical. It is quite probable that our Elamite text is not actually a part of a full-scale epic, but that the names of the popular figures of *GIŠ* = Gilgameš and Šiduri (thus also in Hurrian) were used to introduce a ritual connected more generally with marriage and birth. Cf. Solomon in the 'Song of Songs'.

may be the same 'brother', *i-gi*, who is mentioned in the last line but one). We are at a loss to explain how these characters are to be fitted into the tale of Gilgameš and Siduri, but they might have had some connection with the ritual of which the "drama" was a part (a royal marriage?).

## 5

Tentative translation of Arg. 1, ll. 1-19

- (1) . . . [ . . . ] . . . (2) [ . . . ] for the sake of the gods [ . . . ]  
 (3) (that are) before Siduri, to thee [(?) . . . ]  
 (4) " . . . verily we are strangers (I am a stranger), help!" — he said.

(*Blank*) (Chorus continuing):

[ . . . ] ["Plenty desires] (5) have appeared":

— ten, just ten figs —

Šiduri [the cup-bearer(?)] (6) speaks: "(It is for) woman to bear, but for thee to load (or: to press)", — she said (*Blank*) (Chorus continuing)

(7) "Plenty desires have appeared:

— ten, just ten figs —

[before] the gods (8) (and) before man (for) ten days he brought it (to) thee".

Gilgameš speaks: "Seven [powers?] (9) which the gods took away, and that at (the very) sunrise, — (these were) the [if]e (10) of Gilgameš".

Chorus (seconding Gilgameš): "The Plant by which woman bears which thou (hast) — this I received (or: will have received) before (= for?) a son! Sacrifice, sacrificial food (or: sacrifices are great)! (11) In (the peril of) death, O man, I received it! O woman, verily here I am / we are, help!" he said.

(*Blank*)

(12) (Gilgameš continuing): "Before us plenty sacrifices have appeared,"

— ten, just ten figs —

Chorus: "They are requested, (13) for the sake of the goddesses the desired let be told (thee)".

Gilgameš speaks: (14) "The speech is for the sake of the gods, the desired let be told (thee)".

Chorus (seconding Gilgameš): "The Plant «Woman, bear!» (15) which thou (hast), O woman! Verily we are here! Woman, I had

brought" (?-or: "aid him"), — he / they said. (But see transliteration). (16) (*Blank*) Chorus: "Before us plenty of sacrifices have appeared,

— ten, just ten figs —

(17) p[le]n[ty] ha[ve] appe[ar]ed . . . in the keeping(?) (18) for the sake of five cows, the desire(d) which were (given ??) away (??), (there is) an order, that thou helpst, (19) [he] has rece[iv]ed(?), — he said". (*Blank*)

For the possible translation of the next lines see Notes. The text ends with *Arg. 2* rev. 9': "the desired he can receive" — spoken, apparently, by the Chorus (PAP in 1.8'), Cp. Notes.

## 6

## Notes

*Arg. 1: 2'*. For this often repeated word and a number of others it is crucial to establish the reading of the sign BE. It is not to be read *-pé* (plural morph) because the latter is ascertained in the writing *-pi*; moreover, the sign *da* would have no grammatical explanation in this context. Hence it is preferable to read *nap-pa-bad-da* < /\**nap-ap-akta*/\* "before (-*akta*) the gods", with elision of *-h-* as in many other passages of this text (and in Neo-Elamite generally). The *-h-* is in this text much more often elided than preserved.

*Arg. 1: 3'*. Here we encounter a similar problem. Reading *Ši-du-ri-pé-ma* we get a possessive adjective (\**Šiduri-pe* 'those of Siduri') in the locative *-ma* 'in, inside, among, on'. However, Šiduri has no following, either in this or in other Gilgameš texts. Since we have rejected *pé* in 1. 2, it is reasonable to do the same here, and *-pat-ma* 'at the feet, before' seems to make better sense; cf. the Akkadian *ina šēpē* // *ina pān*.

The name is Šiduri (thus also in the Hurrian version from Hattuša, KUB 8 31-32 (61) = J. Friedrich, *Kleinasiatische Sprachdenkmäler* [1932] 34-35); but Siduri in the Akkadian version. The name is certainly not Sumerian, nor Akkadian — nor probably Elamite, but it may perhaps be Hurrian-Urartian, where \**Šid-ur*i would mean 'the creator, creatress, the one who builds'; or, in the reading \**Šidd-ur*i she might be 'the Seventh' (Pleiad?).

*Arg. 1: 4'* A verbal root *tīha-* does not seem to be attested in Elamite. We might assume the usual Neo-Elamite development of *-u-* > *-i-*, as in *tiri* 'word' for old Elamite *uru*, *riti* 'woman' (in this

text) for Old Elamite *rutu*. However the verbal root \**tuha* appears below as *du-ha(-pi)*. Like *ahahut*, following in l. 11, the word may have been formed from an adverb, viz. \**tiha* 'strange, foreign'; known with the abstract suffix *-t*: *tial* ElamWB I 322. The morph *-ut* (or *-hut*?) may, according to E. Reiner, be a corroborative or confirming particle, i.e. something like 'you know', 'to wit', 'just that' etc.; *tiha-hu* might be the 1st p. pl. of the verbal transitive conjugation, or read *tiha-h-ut* in the 1st p. sg.

*taš-ma-ra* is a predicative form, hence in final position. It is either \**taš-ma-n-ra* 3rd gerundive subjunctive: 'so that he/one should / may help' or a form including *-mara* as particle denoting direct speech (thus according to Friedrich, Reiner; cf. also Grillot-Susini 16,1). The latter solution is more probable; the morph *-ma-ra* occurs often below, and this is in accordance with the fact that the text reproduces a conversation. This leaves the form *taš* without inflexion (and even without the expected second vowel of the root), which means that it probably is an imperative (less probably an infinitive).

Arg. 1: 5'. The form *du-ha-pi*, from \**tuhV* which, in the transitive, means to 'take out' or 'tear out'. This, however, is an intransitive participle plural, or the 3rd p. pl. of the intransitive conjugation, hence to be translated 'are taken out' etc. Our translation 'have appeared' is guesswork. It is in the 3rd p. pl. although the subject /*tukka*/ is in the singular; but the 3rd p. pl. in the predicate is here applicable, because the word expresses an abstract notion: *tukka* is 'wish, entreaty, desire, the desired' or the like (ElamWB I 353 sub *tuk-kan-ra*).

The word *mil* (spelling *mi-ul*) means 'plenty, much, many, great' or the like (ElamWB s.v.).

According to the quotations in ElamWB s.v., *tana* is an adverb connected somehow with counting or enumeration, possibly 'each' or 'exactly, actually, namely'. For the signs following X *da-na* X Jankowska suggests the reading *giš.FEŠ* which of course means 'fig (tree)' — but is often used for 'dates' in the Achaemenian administrative texts. This word probably refers to a date- or fig-sacrifice. Diakonoff thinks that the interpretation in this context remains doubtful.

The lacuna after 'Ši-ā[u-ri. . . and before *na-an-ri* 'speaks' (thus *passim* in Elamite texts) must have contained the epithet of Siduri (*sābītu* — Akkad. 'the tavern-keeper'); according to Friedrich and H. Zimmern's emendation, she was 'given a maltage-cup' by the

gods. However, there is no mention of any tavern either in the Akkadian, the Hurrian, or in this version. So we allow ourselves to translate [*sābītu*] as 'cup-bearer (of the gods)'; her parallel is thus Hebe, who pours ambrosia, the drink of immortality, to the gods. Hence her connection with the 'Plant of life', lit. of 'Woman bearing (children)' in our text, below.

Arg. 1: 6': the root *kuši* means 'to build', but also 'to bear (children)'. cf. ElamWB I 541 sq.; cf. also *kuš-huhu-n* 'family'; with *mf* 'woman' it certainly means 'to bear', cf. *mf-ri-ti* in l. 15.

The following *nu-ja* can be interpreted as *nu* 'thou' (in the Neo-Elamite period the actual pronunciation of this historical spelling would be /ni/+*-a* the relative morph: 'which thou', or 'but thou'). Both verbal roots in this phrase (*kuši* and *har*) are non-inflected and hence are either infinitives or imperatives. (The form *kuši* could stand for *kuši-h* 'I bear', but not *har*, and a reading \**har-ma-n-ra* is improbable for reasons stated above, cf. l. 4'). The verb *hara* apparently means 'to impose, to impress, to push', perhaps also 'to load, to store' (ElamWB I 623 sq.); in any case it stands for some activity. Hence a possible translation is 'a/the woman (is) to bear, but you are to act (in some way)'. These forms could also be ascribed an optative connotation, as in 'long live the king' etc.

Arg. 1: 7'. *tukka* (also *tikka*) is the infinitive of the verb 'to wish, to desire', or an abstract noun 'desire', 'the desired' (also to be restored in the lacuna in l. 5'). Grillot's translation 'raison' *Eléments* [see n. 10] 7, l. 11 = EKI 35; l. 26 = F. Vallat, DAFI 8 [1978] 99) seems less fortunate. Cf. ElamWB I 326, 353. At the end, read probably *nap-p[a-bad-ma]* in congruence with l. 8.

Arg. 1: 8'. *ru* (in parallel with *nap-p* 'gods') stands for *ru(h)*, *ruhu* 'man, men'; *nap-p[a-bad-ma]* *ru-bad-ma* would mean 'in [front of] gods, in front of man/men'; *ir* is 'it' (object, Neo-Elamite for *in*; earlier *-r* would point to the animate class); *luš-ti* is the 3rd p. of the perfective conjugation (*-ti*) from the transitive verb *li-lu-* 'to present, to give away', ElamWB II 833; *nun* is the objective (also indirect objective) 2nd p. sg. personal pronoun; the position of the pronoun after the predicate must be poetic licence. Who is speaking, and to whom? Our guess is that a blank and the logogram *PAP* are missing at the end of l. 6'. Otherwise it may be that Gilgameš is speaking, and that *giš na-an-ri* was put inside his direct speech. To what does the numeral 'seven' refer? Our guess is that what is meant is something analogous to Huwawa's seven *melammū*.



Arg. 1: 9'. *nap-pa(-)ir* is not to be read *\*nappir* 'god', but *\*nap-pa ir* '(but) which the gods (-it)'; *marriš-t-a* 'which took away' 3rd. p. pl. (with elision of the plural marker + perfective morph *-t(i)*+ relative morph *-a*; the morph *-ra* is referential to the 3rd person animate *nap*-).

*a-ak* (to be read, probably, */aiak/*) is the conjunction 'and, also', at that period still with an emphatic sense; *ku-ba-da* is probably */\*kup-akta/* 'for rising, at (sun-)rise'. The uninflected form may here stand for the verbal noun (infinitive). Another possible interpretation may be */\*kup-at/* (-at abstract noun morph)+ *-a* relative morph used as conjunctive particle; *UTU-da* read */\*Nahhunta/*: *Nanhunte*, *Nahhunte* 'sun'+*-a* also as relative-conjunctive.

*ka<sub>4</sub>-tā[m-m]e* is 'life', root *\*kata*, parallel to *la(ha)-me* 'death' in l. 11'; *giš-na* (l. 10') would be a genitive ruled by *\*kata-me*. Note that the syntax is in many aspects different from that in prose texts.

Arg. 1: 10'. After *giš-na* there follows a sign which seems to be *PAP*; *Ū Mf ku-ši* (thus below) is the "Plant of Birth", lit. 'Plant "Woman (to) bear"' (*kuši* cannot be a finite form, because then it would be 1st p. sg.); the form *kuša* is relative, hence 'the Plant, (by) which woman (is) to bear'. This is, of course, the *šammu ša alādi* known from the epic of Etana, but presumably also the Plant of Youth of the Nineveh version of Gilgameš, XI 266–282. That this plant is here connected with Siduri and not with Ut-napišti or his wife, is, no doubt, due to the fact that the Elamite version is typologically older than the Ninevite, and did not contain the interpolated tale of Ut-napišti and the Flood, and therefore had a different finale.

*ir* cf. ll. 8', 9'; *du-a* probably < */duha-h/* 1st p. sg. perfective aspect of a transitive predicate *\*tuhV* 'to take, to appropriate'. On elision of *-h-* v. supra. Compare also *tuha*, *tuhi-e* '(his) own', ElamWB s.v.

*pu-bad-ma* is < */\*puhu-pat-ma/*, parallel to the case of *ru-bad* in l. 8'. *puhu* is 'son', ElamWB I 230 sq.

*ul-lu* is translated as 'misfortune, evil' in ElamWB, s.v., but (in the combination *ullu-ru*, p. 32) as 'sacrifice' by Grillett-Susini. It stands in a parallelism to *tukka* 'desire' and may perhaps mean 'sacrifice', or 'gift', or the like, rather than 'misfortune'. MIN '2' we regard as a sign for repetition of the word *ullu*; *gal* at the end may be 'food' (ElamWB I 420 sq.) or the logogram *GAL* 'great'. The sense is rather obscure, perhaps owing to our interpretation being in some way erroneous.

Arg. 1: 11': *la-me-ma* (< *\*lah-me-ma*) is locative in *-ma* to the abstract noun in *-me* of the verbal root *\*laha* 'to die, to perish'.

*e* may be the 3rd p. personal pronoun, but more likely it is the interjection *e* 'oh!' (attested in Middle Elamite); *ru-ir* (to read */rū/*) is from */\*ruhu-r/* 'man' with the animate class suffix *-r* (the word *rur* 'pale', ElamWB s.v., would hardly fit here); cf. l. 9' and elsewhere; *du-a* < */\*duha-h/* as above; *ri-ti* is obviously the same as *'ri-ti* in l. 15'.

*a-ha-hu-ut*, to interpret as */\*aha-h-ut/* or */\*aha-hu-ut/*, a predicative form derived from the adverb *aha* 'here', cf. l. 4' above. *taš-ma-ra* 'help!': cf. l. 4' above.

Arg. 1: 12'. */\*nuku-pat-ma/* means 'before us'; on *ullu* see above l. 10'; the rest of the phrase coincides with ll. 4'–5' and 7'; *PAP nu-ha-pi*, as we believe, again introduces the chorus. The root *nuha-* seems to mean 'to order, to prescribe, to ordain, to place', intransitive probably 'to be requested(?)'. Cf. ElamWB II 998 (sub *niha-*; insecure!).

Arg. 1: 13'. *nap-pa-bad-da* is to be interpreted as in l. 2', but the logogram or determinative *Mf* shows that we deal here with female deities; *tuk-ka<sub>4</sub>* see above l. 7'.

*ti-ri-man-ri* /-rə/ is 3rd p. gerundive imperfective of *tiri* (< *\*turu*) 'word, order; to speak, to order'; intransitive 'being named, ordered'; gerundive 'let it be told, named, ordered' etc. *nu-un* '(to) thee' objective form of *nu* /ni/ 'thou'; *giš na-an-ri* cf. l. 6', 10'.

Arg. 1: 14' reiterates l. 13', with the difference that the object 'order, word, speech' (*ti-ri*) is directly mentioned at the beginning of the line; *Ū Mf ku-ši* cf. l. 10'.

Arg. 1: 15'. On *nu-ja* cf. l. 6'; here we emend it to 'which thou (hast)': insecure; *'ri-ti* means 'woman', cf. l. 11'; *a-ha-hu-ut* cf. l. 11'.

The next word is difficult. The obvious reading should be *da-za-x*, but a scrutiny of the signs favours rather the reading *da-a-hi(!)* or *da-a-ti(!)*. This would correspond to a Middle Elamite */\*taha-h-ti/* 'I had brought, laid down' with the perfective morph *-ti* (the 2nd p. sg. would probably be *\*da-a-at* or *\*ta-a-tu* 'thou broughtst, thou layest down'). Alternatively, we could suggest *tati* 'also' ElamWB I 270, but this makes little sense. If we are to select the reading *da-a-hi* we might suggest an imperative of the verb *tahha-* 'to aid' (ElamWB I 205), were it not for the vocalism. (Perhaps for */\*tahha-e/* 'aid him'?)

Also the following word, looking at as *me-še*, is difficult; cp. Elamite *meša* 'later', ElamWB II 916(?). But a more strict collation



favours a reading *āš-še*, which is not listed in ElamWB. However there is an *āš-ša* in ElamWB I 89. The first quotation here is quite incomprehensible and W. König's interpretation most impossible. But in the second quotation, SHI 54 iv 20, it is something like 'grace, blessing, gratefulness': "the *āš-ša* of the gods of Elam and also the *āš-ša* of the god Inšušinak". Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that the *āš-ša* of the gods is the same word as the *āš-še* of our text. What follows is /*dunu-ma-ra*/ 'I gave', — he said'. A translation of the whole phrase as 'I had brought a blessing, I gave (it), he said' would make sense but the interpretation remains quite uncertain.

Arg. 1: 16', After the blank comes PAP 'Chorus', then a reiteration of l. 12' from the beginning to 10 GIŠ.PEŠ.

Arg. 1: 17'. The text is very much damaged, but perhaps the beginning of the line is to be read *mi(?) -ul(?) du-ha-pi(?)* as above, but without the object *ullu* or *tukka*; then probably follows *nu(?) -un(?) nu-ha-pi(?)* 'to thee is/are ordered(?)'. The following six(?) signs are unreadable except . . . *nap!-pa* . . ., and the line ends in *kur-ra-ma*, which is a locative to *kurra*. The participle *kur-ra-ka* is translated 'verfügt' by Hinz, and 'retained' by Hallock. Perhaps 'in keeping'.

Arg. 1: 18'. The reading of this line is extremely dubious. The first word is *e-mu* or *ul-mu*; *e-mu* could be compared with *eme* 'away' usually connected with a verb of motion further on in the sentence. 5 GUD.MI *bad-da* (/ \**p-akta*/) is both difficult and uncertain; GUD.MI for 'cow' is all right in Elamite, but why "for the sake" of five cows? *Tukka* 'desire, the desired' has already occurred frequently, and *akka* (if correctly read) would mean 'what' or 'which'; the sign following after *nu-* as copied by Jankowska does not seem to make any sense. It looks like two vertical wedges, the second being somewhat slanted forward, and then one or two, hardly three horizontals. The authors vacillated between *ši* and *ku*. *nuku* is 'we' but it is not to be expected in the context. The following *tiri* as a nominal form means 'speech, order' but can also be a verbal form (infinitive, imperative, or 1st p. sg. transitive); and *taš-du* is 2nd p. sg. of *taš-* 'to help'.

The sentence ends in l. 19' by *ā[a]-iš* 'he put' or *ā[u]-iš* 'he received', followed by *-ma-ra*, the signal of the end of direct speech.

The rest of the text, as far as it can be read at all, consists of phrases which had already occurred before. We shall only note a few passages: in l. 18' note *nu-ku-bad(?) -ma(?)* — the first two signs quite clear — and cp. Arg. 2 rev. 6'.

End of l. 19' and 20'. 'Before *mu-ku* plenty . . . appeared (20) — ten, just ten figs — for the sake of the gods the desired thou, (O) man, the Plant . . .'

Arg. 1: 21': 'Gilgameš speaks', then follows apparently *sa-bat(?) ti(?) -ri(?) -ma-ra*. The hero pronounces a short speech, not more than two words, then follows the signal of ending direct speech. The word *sa-bat(?)* might be an abstract noun from \**sap* 'to write, to write down, to learn' (ElamWB II 1064). Something like: 'learning/writing I pronounced/pronounce! — he said(?)'. Very uncertain; especially the sign *-ri-* is more than dubious.

After the blank, end of l. 21' and the whole of l. 22' — 'Chorus: "Before us plenty [desire(s)] have appeared. Ten, just ten figs! For the sake of the gods the d[esired(?) . . .]"

Arg. 1: 23' begins with *nu-ja-bad*, which is some form of the pronoun *nu* 'thou' which we are at a loss to explain; *nu-un mar-[i-]š-ā[a-r]a x x* [ . . . ] 'which he/they took (from) thee . . .'

1: 24'. *ka-tām du-iš da-na ha-me-ir(?) ul(?) -lu nu-ha-pi* 'life(?) he received, just at that time (ElamWB I, p. 613) is taken(?), (a) sacrifice(s) was/were ordered(?)'.

Arg. 1: 25': 'Chorus "Before us plenty . . ."

Arg. 1: 26': continuation of a speech of the Chorus: ' . . . which the gods took away, to thee [were] or[dered?] . . .'

Arg. 1: 27' contains only 'Gilgameš speaks:' before a blank, and l. 28' 'for the sake of the goddesses' . . .

Arg. 2: 1'–2' mentions, apparently, two female names of uncertain etymology, *Pir-ad-da-rak* and — after a considerable lacuna — *Šu-ti-ja-āš*, the latter having, perhaps, a Kassite ring. It is announced that they 'are dead' (*la-pi* < / \**laha-pi*/, form as *du-ha-pi*, *nu-ha-pi*). There is, unfortunately, no explanation for the appearance of these names, nor of the Hurrian(?) proper name(?) *Zi-gi A.HI BE-nu-nu* in rev. l. 6'.

Arg. 2: 3': The composite postposition *-bad-ma* is possibly the end of some direct speech, although we lack the signal *-ma-ra*. Follows PAP 'Chorus', pronouncing 'The Plant (G) with thee (ElamWB II 1005) I made' (*ud-da* for /*hutta*/ ElamWB II 1198) — perhaps 'made to something' or 'made to do something'. However, *u* may also stand for the pronoun 'I', hence 'I made (something) with thee'.

Arg. 2: 4' mentions '*Šu-ti-ja-āš* apparently in the same context as in l. 2; l. 5' is unreadable. The end of l. 6' introduces the 'Chorus' (PAP).

'Arg. 2 Rev. 1' contains the already well known formula '[Ten figs, just] ten figs'.

Arg. 2 Rev. 2'. *ka<sub>4</sub>-muš* is the name of a profession according to ElamWB I 429.

Arg. 2 Rev. 3'. unreadable.

Arg. 2 Rev. 4'. *zi-ja-ak a-ak* 'was seen (ElamWB II 1307), and also'.

Arg. 2 Rev. 5'. *ha-ra-ak a-ak* contains the intransitive participle of the verb *hara-*, on which cf. Arg. 1: 6'.

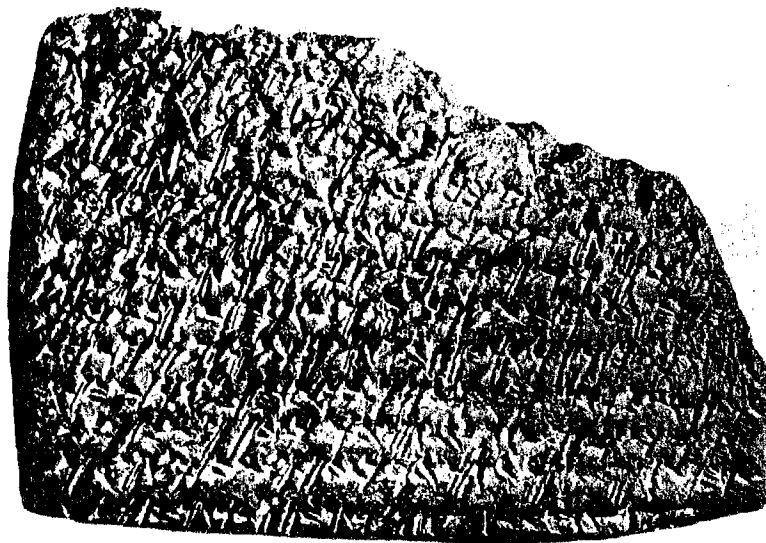
Arg. 2 Rev. 6'. See ll. 1'-2' above.

Arg. 2 Rev. 7'. *ti-da-ak* as a participle of the verb *tiV-* 'to lie, to speak a falsehood'.

Arg. 2 Rev. 8'. The new speech of the Chorus begins with the unclear *mu-ku*, for which see also Arg. 1, end of l. 19'-l. 20'; /ike/ is 'brother' (ElamWB I 19. Cp. l. 6? Or is the 'brother' of Gilgameš meant?

Arg. 2 Rev. 9'. is the last line of this tablet and probably of the whole text: 'the desire(d) he can receive'. This probably ends the discussion of the contested 'Plant of Birth'.

Arg. 3 see above in Chapter 2.



Arg. 1 Obv.



Arg. 2 Obv.

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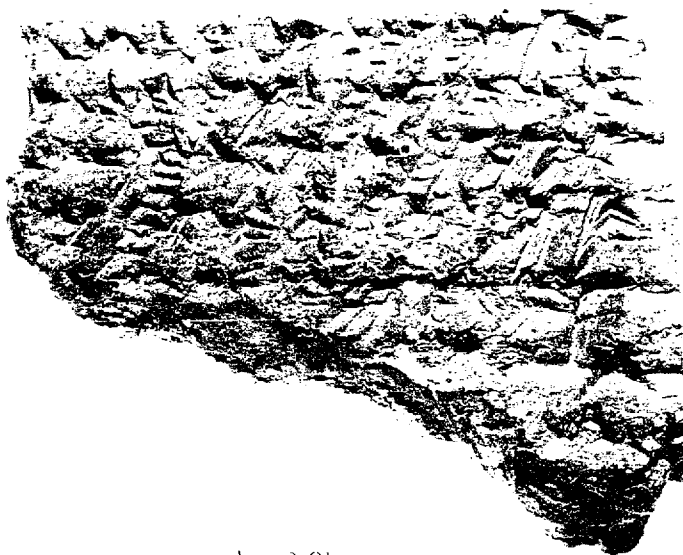
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Arg. 1 Obv.



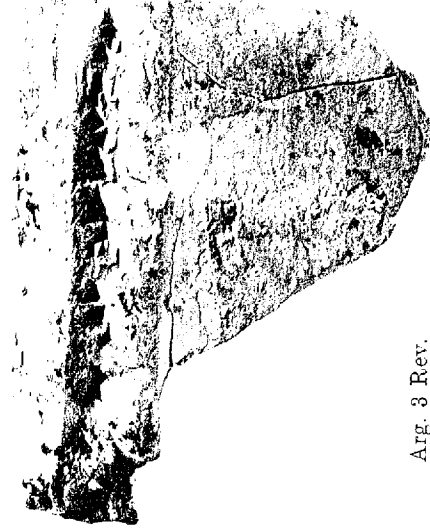
Arg. 2 Obv.



Arg. 2 Rev.



Arg. 3 Obv.



Arg. 3 Rev.

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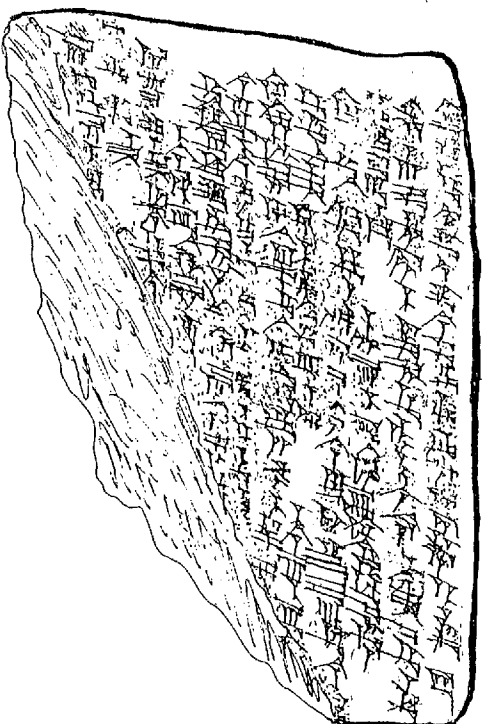
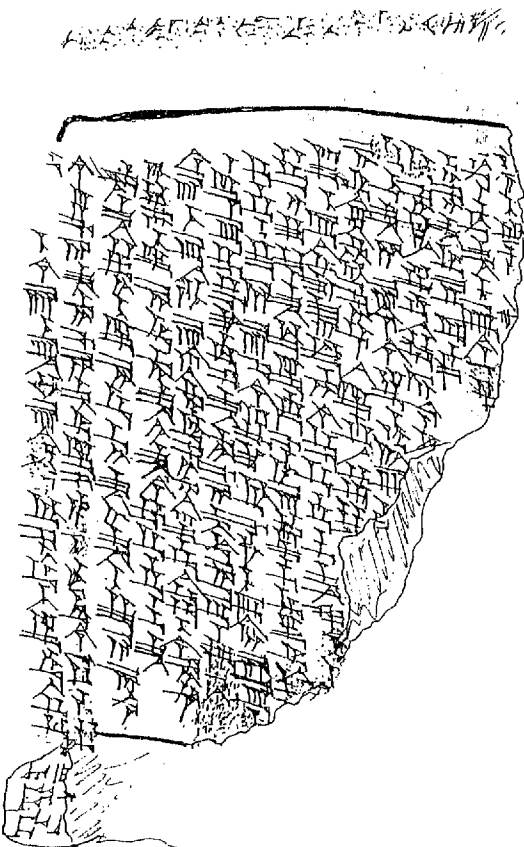


Fig. 1: Arg. 1.

3 Obv.

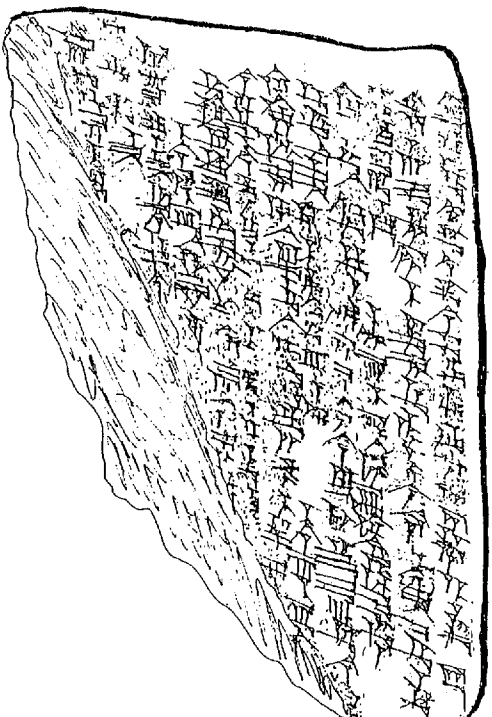
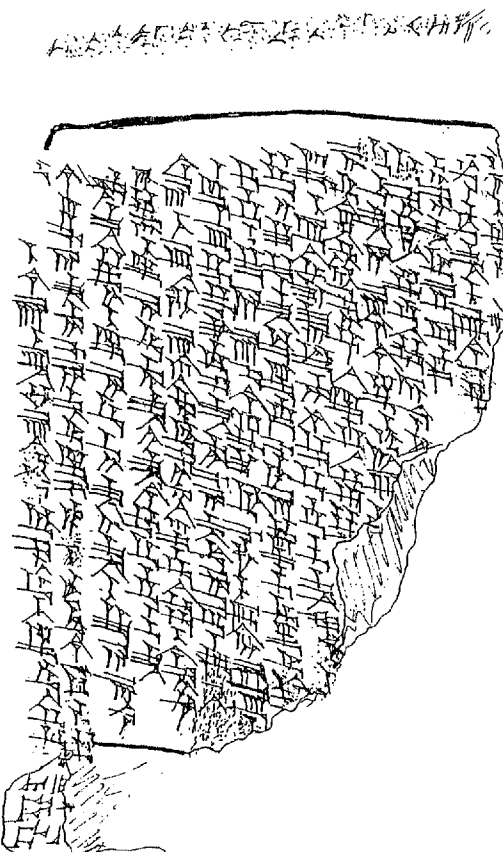


Fig. 1: Arg. 1.

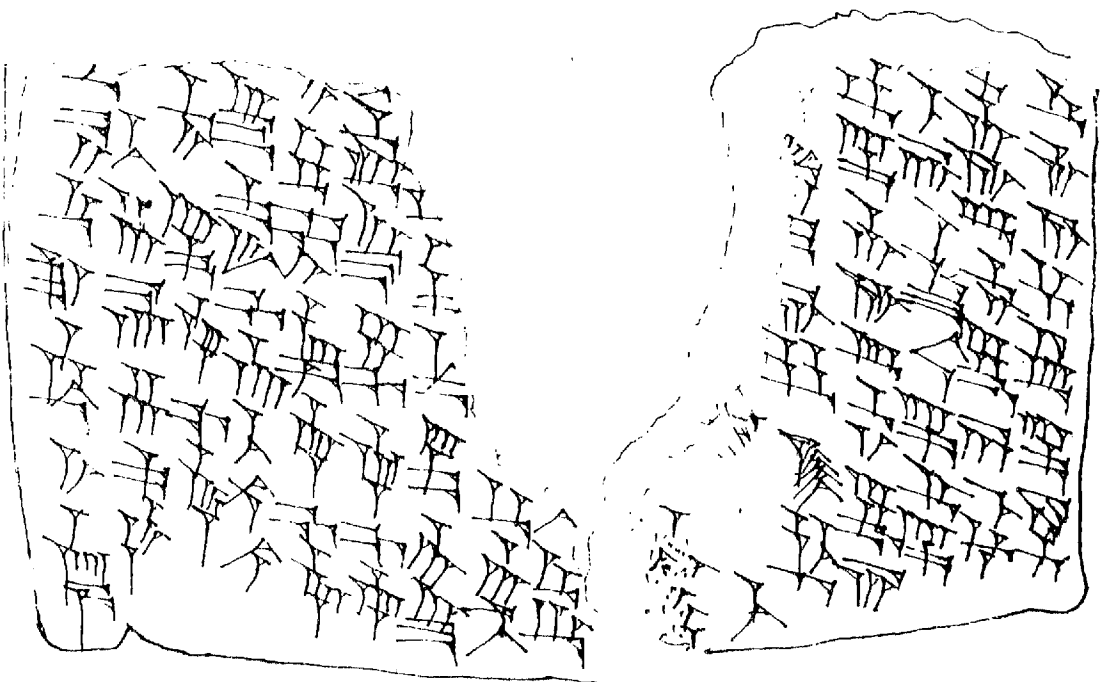


Fig. 2: Arg. 2.





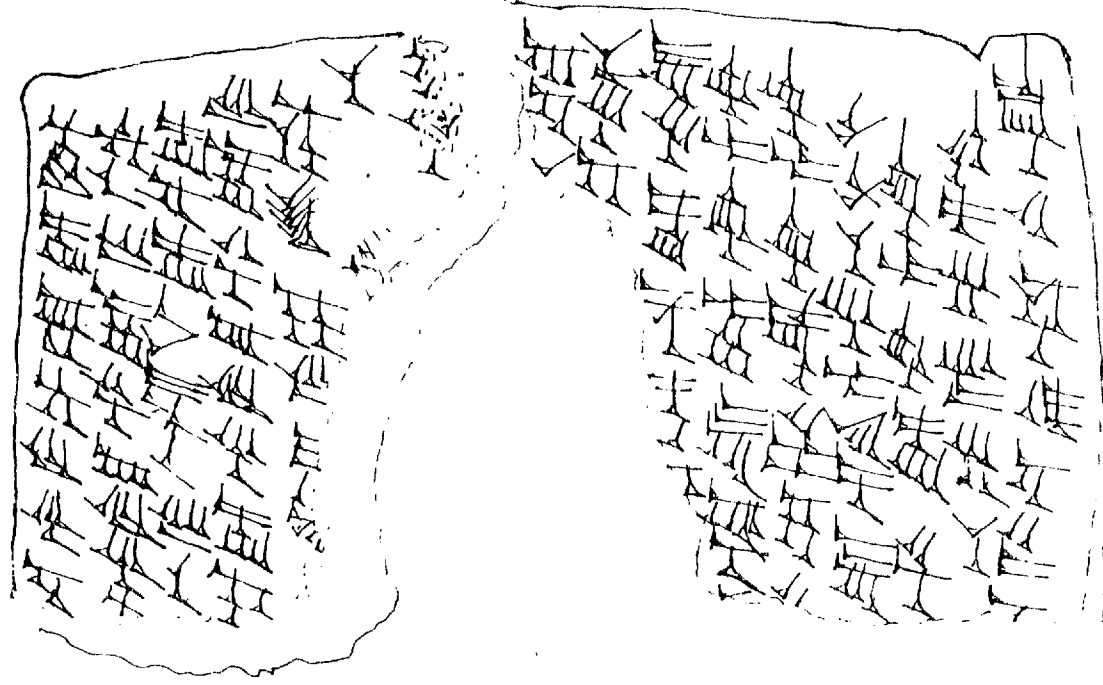


Fig. 2: Arg. 2.

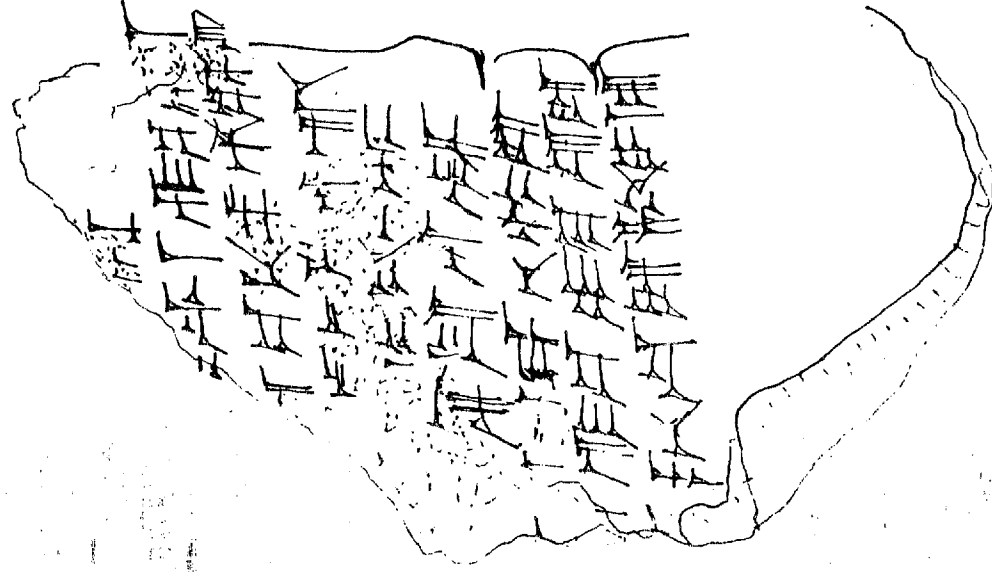


Fig. 3: Arg. 3.



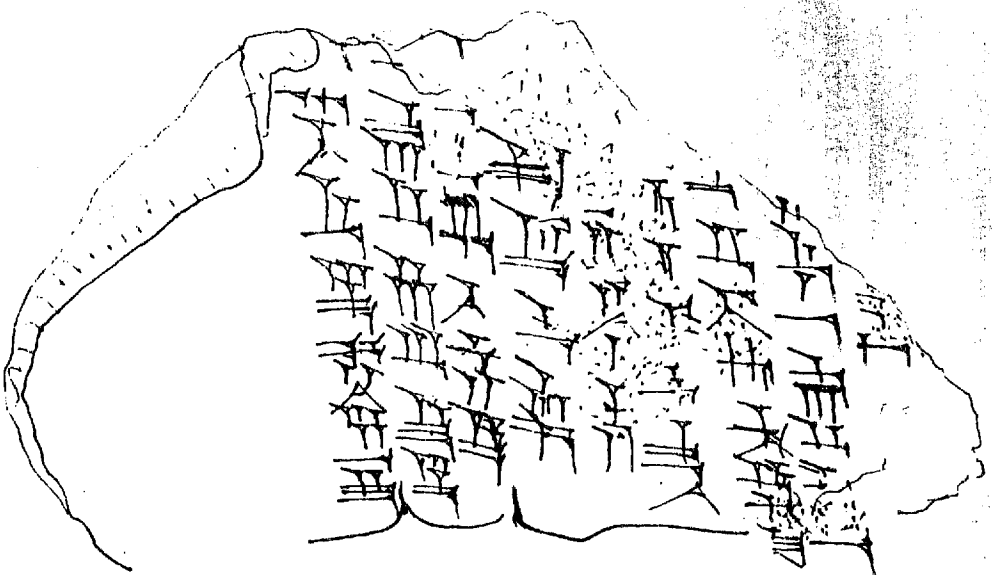


Fig. 3: ARG. 3.

Handwritten notes in a cursive script, likely a transcription of the cuneiform text shown in the figure. The notes are written in a dark ink on a light background.

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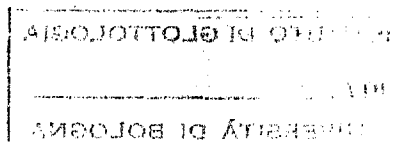
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## Inhalt

JOSEF BAUER: SIM = su <sub>x</sub> .....	8
E. A. BRAUN-HOLZINGER: REC 447.LA = Libationsbecher .....	1
G. VAN DRIEL: The British Museum 'Sippar' Collection: Babylonia 1882-1893 .....	102
W. FARBER: (W)ardat-lil(m) .....	14
WALTER FARBER: Lamaštu, Enlil, Anu-ikšur: Streiflichter aus Uruks Gelehrtenstuben .....	223
PAMELA GERARDI: Thus, He Spoke: Direct Speech in Esarhaddon's Royal Inscriptions .....	245
VOLKERT HAAS: Ein Preis auf das Wasser in hurritischer Sprache .....	261
AMIR HARRAK: Middle Assyrian <i>bīt ḥašimī</i> .....	61
WAYNE HOROWITZ: The Akkadian Name for Ursa Minor: <sup>mul</sup> mar.gid.da.an.na = <i>eriqqi</i> <i>šamē/šamāmi</i> .....	242
HANS MARTIN KÜMMEL†: Ein Kaufvertrag aus Hana mit mittelasyrischer <i>limu</i> -Datierung .....	191
FRANCESCO POMPONIO: The Reichskalender of Ur III in the Umma Texts .....	10
DIANA L. STEIN: A Reappraisal of the "Sausātatar Letter" from Nuzi .....	36
MATTHEW. W. STOLPER: Registration and Taxation of Slave Sales in Achaemenid Babylonia .....	80
RAYMOND WESTBROOK: Cuneiform Law Codes and the Origins of Legislation .....	201
G. WILHELM: Die zweite Tafel der Serie Kagal in Hattusa .....	73
CLAUS WILCKE: Die Emar-Version von „Dattelpalme und Tamariske“ — ein Rekonstruktionsversuch .....	161

## Buchbesprechungen

Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran 18 (R. M. BOEHMER) .....	142
Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran 19 (R. M. BOEHMER) .....	159
BÖRKER-KLÄHN, JUTTA: Altvorderasiatische Bildstelen und vergleichbare Felsreliefs. Mit einem Beitrag von Adelheid Shunnar-Misera (E. BLEIN-TREU) .....	149
BOUCHARLAT, RÉMY, et OLIVIER LECOMTE: Fouilles de Tureng Tepe sous la direction de Jean Deshayes I. Les périodes sassanides et islamiques avec des contributions de Jean-Claude Gardin et Rika Gyselen (L. TRÜMPELMANN) .....	149
The Cambridge History of Iran. Vol. II: The Median and Achaemenian Periods. Edited by Ilya Gershevitch (P. CALMEYER) .....	157
COLBOW, GUDRUN: Zur Rundplastik des Gudea von Lagaš (E. A. BRAUN-HOLZINGER) .....	302
COLLON, DOMINIQUE: First Impressions. Cylinder Seals in the Ancient Near East (F. BLOCHER) .....	151
Cuneiform Texts in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Vol. I. Tablets, Cones and Bricks of the Third and Second Millennia B.C. Edited by Ira Spar (D. O. EDZARD) .....	121
DALLEY, STEPHANIE und J. N. POSTGATE: The Tablets from Fort Shalmaneser (K. WATANABE) .....	272
FURLONG, IRIS: Divine Headdresses of Mesopotamia in the Early Dynastic Period (R. M. BOEHMER) .....	278
GRONEBERG, BRIGITTE R. M., Syntax, Morphologie und Stil der jung-babylonischen „hymnischen“ Literatur. Teil 1: Grammatik, Teil 2: Belegsammlung und Textkatalog (E. REINER) .....	118
Hethitica VII. Comité de rédaction: Emmanuel Laroche (Paris) — Erich Neu (Bochum) — Yves Duhoux — Guy Jucquois — René Lebrun (Louvain-la-Neuve) (G. WILHELM) .....	133
Hethitica VIII. Comité de rédaction: (wie hiervor). Acta Anatolica E. Laroche oblata, ed. R. Lebrun (Colloque anatolien, Paris, 1-5 juillet 1985) (G. WILHELM) .....	133
HUTTER, MANFRED: Altorientalische Vorstellungen von der Unterwelt. Literar- und religionsgeschichtliche Überlegungen zu „Nergal und Ereškigal“ (D. O. EDZARD) .....	124
HUTTER, MANFRED: Behexung, Entsühnung und Heilung. Das Ritual der Tunnawiya für ein Königspaar aus mittelhethitischer Zeit (KBo. XXI — KUB IX 34 — KBo. XXI 6) (P. TABACHA) .....	293

Insight through Images. Studies in Honor of Edith Porada, edited by Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati in collaboration with Paolo Matthiae and Maurits van Loon (S. DUNHAM) .....	286
Kaniššuar. A Tribute to Hans G. Güterbock on his Seventy-Fifth Birthday May 27, 1983, ed. by H. A. Hoffner, Jr. and G. M. Beckman (G. WILHELM) .....	130
KARSTENS, K. Typologische Untersuchungen an Gefäßen aus altakkadischen Gräbern des Königsfriedhofes in Ur: Ein Beitrag zur modernen archäologischen Methodik (M. LAIRD) .....	141
KLEISS, WOLFRAM: Die Entwicklung von Palästen und palastartigen Wohnbauten in Iran (L. BIER) .....	300
Les lettres d'El Amarna. Correspondance diplomatique du pharaon. Traduction de William L. Moran avec la collaboration de V. Haas et G. Wilhelm. Traduction française de Dominique Collon et Henri Cazelles (D. O. EDZARD) .....	128
MEIJER, DIEDERIK J. W.: A Survey in Northeastern Syria (B. HROUDA) .....	140
MOORTGAT, ANTON: Vorderasiatische Rollsiegel. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Steinschneidekunst. 3., unveränderte Auflage (D. O. EDZARD) .....	129
MOORTGAT-CORRENS, U.: Tell Chuëra in Nordost-Syrien, Vorläufige Berichte über die neunte und zehnte Grabungskampagne 1982 und 1983 (U. SEIDL) .....	297
MOORTGAT-CORRENS, U.: Tell Chuëra in Nordost-Syrien, Vorläufiger Bericht über die elfte Grabungskampagne 1985, mit Beiträgen von B. Hrouda, F. Blocher, T. Eickhoff (U. SEIDL) .....	297
NEUMANN, HANS: Handwerk in Mesopotamien. Untersuchungen zu einer Organisation in der Zeit der III. Dynastie von Ur (M. SIGRIST) .....	299
Oikumene — Studia ad historiam antiquam classicam et orientalem spectantia 4. Editores I. Hahn, L. Kákosy, G. Komoróczy, E. Maróti, J. Sarkady (W. FARBER) .....	291
ORTHMANN, W., KLEIN, H., LÜTH, F.: Tell Chuëra in Nordost-Syrien 1982-1983, Vorläufiger Bericht über die 9. und 10. Grabungskampagne (U. SEIDL) .....	297
SEIDL, URSULA: Die Babylonischen Kudurru-Reliefs. Symbole mesopotamischer Gottheiten (B. HROUDA) .....	301
SEIDL, URSULA: Die elamischen Felsreliefs von Kūrāngun und Naqš-e Rostam (mit einem Anhang von O. P. Skærvø) (E. CARTER) .....	145
HARVEY WEISS (Hrsg.): The Origins of Cities in Dry-Farming Syria and Mesopotamia in the Third Millenium B.C. (B. HROUDA) .....	139
Indices (T. KWASMAN) .....	306

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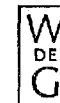
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## Inhalt

BENDT ALSTER: Shuruppak's Instructions — Additional lines identified in the Early Dynastic Version .....	15
I. M. DIAKONOFF and N. B. JANKOWSKA: An Elamite Gilgameš Text from Argištihenele, Urartu (Armavir-blur, 8th century B.C.) .....	102
DIETZ OTTO EDZARD: Indusschrift aus der Sicht des Assyriologen .....	124
DIETZ OTTO EDZARD: Gilgameš und Huwawa A. I. Teil .....	165
A. R. GEORGE: The Day the Earth Divided: a Geological Aetiology in the Babylonian Gilgameš Epic .....	214
CHRISTIAN GIRBAL: Zur Grammatik des Mittani-Hurritischen .....	93
JEAN-JACQUES GLASSNER: L'hospitalité en Mésopotamie ancienne: aspect de la question de l'étranger .....	60
WOLFGANG HEIMPEL: Ein zweiter Schritt zur Rehabilitierung der Rolle des Tigris in Sumer .....	204
GREGORY D. JORDAN: Usury, Slavery, and Land-Tenure: The Nuzi <i>tidennūtu</i> Transaction .....	76
JACOB KLEIN: Šeleppūtum a hitherto Unknown Ur III Princess .....	20
W. G. LAMBERT: The Name of Nergal Again .....	40
W. G. LAMBERT: Surrejoinder to P. Steinkeller (ZA 80 [1990] 53–59) .....	220
MARC LEBEAU: Esquisse d'une histoire de la Haute Mésopotamie au début de l'Age du Bronze .....	241
PIOTR MICHAŁOWSKI: The Shekel and the Vizier .....	1
LUCIO MILANO: é-duru <sup>ki</sup> = "One Score" (of People) in the Ebla Accounting .....	9

HEINRICH OTTEN: Bemerkungen zur Überlieferung einiger hethitischer Texte .....	223
J. N. POSTGATE: Archaeology and the Texts – Bridging the Gap .....	228
PIOTR STEINKELLER: More on the Name of Nergal and Related Matters .....	53

### Buchbesprechungen

L. CAGNI, (ed.): Il bilinguismo a Ebla: Atti del convegno internazionale (Napoli, 19–22 aprile 1982). (J. N. POSTGATE) .....	140
FARBER, WALTER: Schlaf, Kindlein, schlaf! Mesopotamische Babybeschwörungen und -Rituale (= Mesopotamian Civilizations, Vol. 2). (W. VON SODEN) .....	136
GURNEY, O. R.: Literary and Miscellaneous Texts in the Ashmolean Museum (= Oxford Editions of Cuneiform Texts 11). (A. R. GEORGE) ....	155
HAGENBUCHNER, ALBERTINE: Die Korrespondenz der Hethiter, I. Teil: Die Briefe unter ihren sprachlichen und thematischen Gesichtspunkten (= Texte der Hethiter, hsg. von Annelies Kammenhuber, Bd. 15). – 2. Teil: Die Briefe mit Transkription, Übersetzung und Kommentar (= Texte der Hethiter ... 16). (H. FREYDANK) .....	308
HARRAK, AMIR: Assyria and Hanigalbat: A historical reconstruction of bilateral relations from the middle of the Fourteenth to the end of the Twelfth Centuries B.C. (= Texte und Studien zur Orientalistik, Band 4). (J. N. POSTGATE) .....	139
Keilschriftliche Literaturen. Ausgewählte Vorträge der XXXII. Rencontre assyriologique internationale. Herausgegeben von Karl Hecker und Walter Sommerfeld (= Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient 6, herausgegeben von H. Kühne, H. J. Nissen und J. Renger). (D. O. EDZARD) .....	144
KRAUS, F. R.: Briefe aus kleineren westeuropäischen Sammlungen (= Altbabylonische Briefe in Umschrift und Übersetzung, Heft 10). (W. SOMMERFELD) .....	141
NEU, ERICH – CHRISTEL RÜSTER. (Hrsg.): Documentum Asiae Minoris Antiquae. Festschrift für Heinrich Otten zum 75. Geburtstag. (H. KLENGEL) .....	151
POPKO, M. Hethitische Rituale und Festbeschreibungen (= Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi, Heft LVIII). (S. KOŠAK) .....	146
POSTGATE, J. N.: The Archive of Urad-Serua and his Family. A Middle Assyrian Household in Government Service. Edited, with a commentary. (H. FREYDANK) .....	306

Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, herausgegeben vom Vorderasiatischen Museum. Neue Folge, Heft VI (Heft XXII): HORST KLENGEL, Altbabylonische Texte aus Babylon. (C. WILCKE) .....	297
WATANABE, KAZUKO: Die <i>adê</i> -Vereidigung anlässlich der Thronfolge-regelung Asarhaddons (= Baghdader Mitteilungen, Beiheft 3). (W. FARBER) .....	160
WESTENHOLZ, AAGE: Old Sumerian and Old Akkadian Texts in Philadelphia, Part two: The Akkadian Texts, The Enlilemaba Texts, and the Union Archive (= C(arsten) N(iebuhr) I(nstitute) Publications 3). (W. VON SODEN) .....	135
WILHELM, GERNOT: The Hurrians. Translated from German by Jennifer Barnes, with a chapter by Diana Stein. (D. O. EDZARD) .....	145
Indices (W. SALLABERGER) .....	314